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Intelligence Information Cable

ROUTINE

IN 475014

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Classified by Reporting Officer. Exempt from General Declassification Schedule of E.O. 11652 Exemption Category 58 (2) Impossible to Determine Date of Automatic Declassification.

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(B)(3) CITE

DIST 29 JANUARY 1975

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI JANUARY 1975
SUBJECT FRICTION BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AND THE
HOA HAO BUDDHISTS OVER THE ISSUE OF THE HOA HAO SELF
DEFENSE FORCES
ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON

SOURCE

1. [] THE LUONG TRONG TUONG FACTION (B)(3)
OF THE HOA HAO BUDDHISTS WAS PREPARING FOR A CONFRONTATION WITH
THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT (GVN) OVER THE ISSUE OF THE HOA HAO
SELF-DEFENSE FORCES (BAO AN). TUONG, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS IN
EARLY JANUARY TO HIS FOLLOWERS IN SAIGON, OUTLINED HIS POSITION
AS ONE OF SUPPORT FOR THE GVN. HE INSISTED, HOWEVER, THAT HOA HAO
FORCES BE USED TO DEFEND HOA HAO TERRITORY AND THAT NO HOA HAO
TROUPS BE ASSIGNED OUTSIDE OF HOA HAO PROVINCES IN MILITARY REGION 4.

TUONG'S GOAL IS TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
HOA HAO'S RIGHT TO CONTROL AND DEFEND THEIR OWN TERRITORY.

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THROUGHOUT JANUARY, THE GVN WAS UNABLE TO DRAFT HOA HAO MEMBERS INTO THE GVN ARMED FORCES BECAUSE EACH POTENTIAL DRAFTEE WAS "RESCUED" BY THE BAO AN BEFORE HE COULD BE REMOVED. TUONG HAS, HOWEVER, RESISTED EFFORTS BY HOA HAO MEMBERS OF THE GVN ARMED FORCES TO DESERT THEIR UNITS AND JOIN THE BAO AN, REGARDING THIS AS AN UNNECESSARY PROVOCATION OF THE GVN.

2. DURING THE WEEK OF 20 JANUARY, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN VAN HAO BEGAN TALKS WITH HOA HAO LEADERS TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE. HAO HAS INQUIRED, INDIRECTLY, IF TUONG WOULD ACCEPT A 15,000 MAN FORCE FOR HOA HAO TERRITORY WITH THE REMAINDER OF DRAFT ELIGIBLE MEMBERS SERVING IN OTHER AREAS, BUT IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER IN MAKING THIS SUGGESTION HE IS SPEAKING OFFICIALLY FOR THE GVN.

COMMENT: HAO WAS PROBABLY CHOSEN TO DEAL WITH THE HOA HAO BECAUSE HE IS MARRIED TO THE THIRD WIFE AND WIDOW OF BA C U T, THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF HOA HAO FOUNDER HUYNH PHU S O.)

3. (FIELD COMMENT: THE ISSUE OF HOA HAO SELF DEFENSE FORCES HAS BEEN A LONG-STANDING POINT OF CONTENTION BETWEEN THE GVN AND THE HOA HAO INVOLVING THE GVN'S DEMAND THAT THE FORCES TURN OVER THEIR

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WEAPONS TO THE GVN.

PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU HAS EXPRESSED HIS DETERMINATION TO HAVE HOA HAO FORCES DISSOLVED. HIS CONCERN WAS BROUGHT ON, IN PART, BY RECENT CAO DAI CHURCH ATTEMPTS TO NEUTRALIZE THE AREA OF THE CAO DAI HOLY SEE. THIEU SEEMS WILLING, HOWEVER, TO ACCEPT A "PAPER" UNDERSTANDING BY WHICH THE HOA HAO WOULD AGREE IN WRITING TO DISSOLVE THEIR FORCES AND BECOME PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PEOPLE'S SELF DEFENSE FORCE.)

4. FIELD DISSEM: EMBASSY DEFENSE ATTACHE AT SAIGON: SENT TO CINCPAC.

CLASSIFIED BY RECORDED REPORTING OFFICER. EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF E.O. 11652. EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2). IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE DATE OF AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION.

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